

Indigenous Educational Models for Contemporary Practice

In Our Mother's Voice
Volume II

"Many educational traditions and practices have been lost or only remain in the memories of survivors of the indigenous peoples' holocaust while other educational traditions have remained active. *Indigenous Educational Models for Contemporary Practice* provides educational models that affirm the vitality of these traditions and their adaptability to contemporary times... It is my hope and belief that the educational models described in this book will help put students, teachers, and the world on the path to harmony and hope."

Joel Spring, Queens College, City University of New York, USA,
from the Series Editor Foreword

The book challenges teachers, researchers, educational leaders, and community stakeholders to build dynamic learning environments through which indigenous learners can be "Boldly Indigenous in a Global World!" Three days of focused dialogue at the 2005 World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education (WIPCE) led to the charge to create Volume II of *Indigenous Educational Models for Contemporary Practice: In Our Mother's Voice*. Building on the first volume, Volume II examines these topics:

- Regenerating and transforming language and culture pedagogy that reminds us that what is "Contemporary is Native"
- Living indigenous leadership that engages and ensures the presence, readiness, and civic work of our next generation of leaders
- Indigenizing assessment and accountability that makes certain that native values and strengths lead this important work
- Highlighting the power of partnerships that begin with the child-elder, which is then nurtured in community and institutions to cross boundaries of cultural difference, physical geography, native and non-native institutions and communities

Indigenous Educational Models for Contemporary Practice: In Our Mother's Voice, Volume II honors the wisdom of our ancestors, highlights the diversity of our indigenous stories, and illuminates the passion of forward-looking scholars.

About the Editor: Maenette Benham, Kanaka Maoli, is a Professor in the Department of Educational Administration at Michigan State University. As a scholar, mentor, and teacher, her inquiry centers on engaged collective leadership, the wisdom of knowing and praxis of social justice, and the effects of educational policy and practice on indigenous people. She is the author of numerous articles and books on these topics.

Cover photo: Lanta Eriant

Cover concept: Teresa Magnuson and Keiki Kawae'ae'a

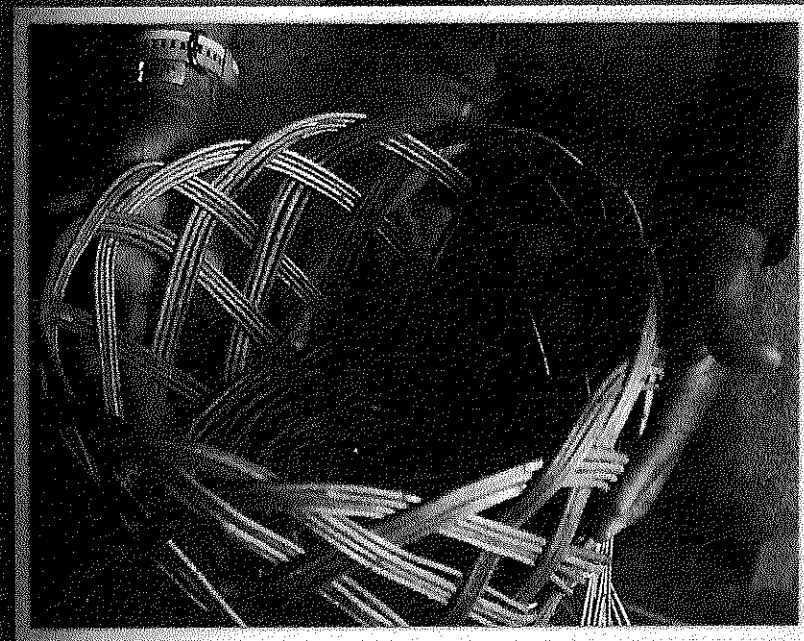
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Edited by

Maenette Kape'ahiokalani Padeken Ah Nee-Benham

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 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
NEW YORK AND LONDON

First published 2008
by Routledge
270 Madison Ave, New York, NY 10016

Simultaneously published in the UK
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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Typeset in Goudy by
Swales & Willis Ltd, Exeter, Devon
Printed and bound in the United States of America on acid-free paper by
Edwards Brothers, Inc.

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Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
A catalog record has been requested for this book

ISBN10: 0-8058-6402-4 (hbk)
ISBN10: 0-8058-6403-2 (pbk)
ISBN10: 1-4106-1855-2 (ebk)

ISBN13: 978-0-8058-6402-1 (hbk)
ISBN13: 978-0-8058-6403-8 (pbk)
ISBN13: 978-1-4106-1855-9 (ebk)

*In memory of Beatrice Medicine for lighting our way!
To the champions of our indigenous schools: teachers and leaders.
To our native children and youth, today and seven generations hence.*

*Hoe aku i kou wa'a!
(Paddle your canoe forward!)*



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Performance Standards. The ultimate goal is to develop a curriculum model for Hawaiian-medium education that strengthens students through traditional ways of teaching and learning found in storytelling, reciting oral histories, giving speeches, memorizing, chanting, singing, and hula. These traditional methods have proven to be valuable and effective agents of literacy.

For example, the traditional *Hakalama*, an approach to teaching reading developed in the nineteenth century, is now used to teach beginning reading in the *He Aupuni Palapala* model. The *Hakalama* is made up of Hawaiian consonant-vowel clusters: 40 clusters with, and 40 clusters without, the *kahakō*, or macron. This traditional teaching approach has proven very successful, helping young children learn to read Hawaiian quickly and fluently. Students move from fluency to understanding with emphasis placed on comprehension strategies and vocabulary, which enable students to discover and to understand important concepts of Hawaiian language, culture, and perspectives.

Another important part of the *He Aupuni Palapala* model is the *meiwi*—traditional elements of both oral and written Hawaiian poetry, songs, storytelling, oratory, and narration. Examples of *meiwi* are embraced in all areas of literacy. A major goal is for students to recognize, understand, and utilize *meiwi* in their own oral and written language creation of stories, poetry, songs, and so on.

Native Hawaiians once held the prestigious position of being one of the world's most literate peoples. Through the development of the *He Aupuni Palapala* literacy model, we hope to make that position a reality once more. We believe that this can be achieved by fully utilizing the wisdom found in the *Kumu Honua Mauli Ola* educational philosophy. The language, the culture, the spiritual connection to our ancestors, and our behaviors must be a vital part of the literacy program that we provide for our children and future generations.

In summary, the foundational *Kumu Honua Mauli Ola* continues to shape evolving P-20 programs focused on revitalizing the Hawaiian language. The successful outcomes seen thus far in the programs described above provide hope that the dream of fully revitalizing the Hawaiian language will someday become a reality.

Chapter 5

“Ho’i hou i ke kumu!” Teachers as Nation Builders



Keiki Kawai'ae'a

Echoes of voices from our ancestral past remind us that our Native languages and cultures define who we are, where we come from, and whom we become as Native peoples. They are a call that beckons to us to return to the source—*ho’i hou i ke kumu*—because the answers that build strong nations are within us and need only to be reawakened. The call resonates in the words of our languages. It is seen in the practices of our traditions and beliefs. It is connected through our spirituality. It is felt within the center of our *na’au* (gut), that place from which wisdom flows and we become enlightened—*na’auao*—as cultural beings. This gift passed on by our *kūpuna* (elders), through our parents, to us, and on to our children and grandchildren is our cultural legacy.

Through the lessons of our *kūpuna*, we are reminded that tradition, genealogy, history, and place are important parts of our connection to language and culture. Language is the core, the code that maintains our cultural world view and is perpetuated through our actions, beliefs, spirituality, practices, and traditions. Genealogy and history trace our stories of family, tradition, and origin, and they connect us to a place and a people. These understandings are built on timeless wisdom and provide valuable insights useful for our modern-day contexts.

Our *mauli* (life force) is the living spirit within us, the fire that is fueled

by the people and places that surround us and tend to our welfare and development. Education in the Native mind is holistic and a lifelong process that is nurtured through spiritual and emotional connection, intellectual inquiry and challenge, social-cultural maturity, and physical development. By looking through the window of our ancient past, we can reconnect to lifelong lessons that have positive implications for educating the Native child—a continuum of our Native legacy in progress.

What, then, are these lessons that foster our ability to internalize our place and build an understanding of our role as responsible, capable, caring, and healthy human beings? The lessons begin early in life, teaching who we are and how we are connected to the world that surrounds us. Developing our cultural identity and a sense of belonging is the underpinning that begins to develop our personal integrity as Native peoples and as cultural beings. Proficiency in academic and life skills strengthens our ability to contribute to our families and communities. Thinking critically through challenges that allow us to make *pono* (proper) decisions and provide us avenues to give back and share with others is innate within the Native sense.

The *kumu* (literally “source”) or teacher plays a critical role in our ability as learners to see, feel, experience, and understand the connection to the things around us; our interdependence on each other and with our place; and finally, our role and responsibility as Native, community, and world citizens. Preparing educators as cultural leaders and community and family partners adds a new twist to teacher preparation. It requires us to REconsider the needs of our communities and people, and to REcreate a vision for education based on the wisdom of our culture as the foundation. Such basic understandings include love of our people, love of our homeland, love of our language and culture, and love of knowledge and wisdom as the cornerstones that build a conceptual framework for teacher development. The task is a call to action, a journey to REgenerate our languages, cultures, and traditions. It is a time to REthink our current practices and REclaim our traditional wisdom and practices from within which Native pedagogy and practice have always existed.

The Native language and culture provide the foundation. The vision provides a direction for preparing a new kind of culture-based educators. These educators can serve as change agents in the restoration of healthy Native and culturally oriented communities. Beginning first with the

children, and working together with the families and community, these teachers will prepare the generations of future families, workers, and leaders. Teachers are nation builders. Preparing teachers as cultural and educational practitioners requires abilities from a new skill set aligned with, yet different from, mainstream practices. Language, culture, community, pedagogy, dispositions, and content are the components of a Native-based teacher education program. These six major components constitute a rigorous program that contributes to the preparation of teachers as culture-based educators—teachers as nation builders.

1. *REvitalize*—Use the Native language and teach through the Native language. Teachers who have the gift of the Native language have a richer perspective and understanding of the culture than those who do not. Speaking in the Native language demonstrates the importance of the language and culture and provides a living example for learners. Teachers as nation builders perpetuate the use of the Native language to ensure cultural survival and foster learners' cultural identity.

2. *REnew*—Instill knowledge of Native pedagogy and natural learning processes that build meaningful connections through the culture. Traditional methods of child rearing, vocational training, life-skills preparation, cultural practices, arts, traditional stories, and folklore (oral and written) provide the foundation for Native teaching and instruction. The language also provides the critical context for understanding Native pedagogy through such venues as traditional wisdom passed down through wise sayings, riddles, and stories. Building on Native ways of learning, teaching, reflection, and leadership provides best practices that complement learners' culture. Understanding the naturalness of human development and the innate qualities inherent in our humanness—in relation to place and culture—gives teachers the tools to address the diversity of learners. It also provides teachers with strategies to nurture learners' wholeness. Teachers as nation builders understand the cultural and natural process of learning and incorporate their skills with the needs of learners.

3. *RElevance*—Foster inquiry and passion for learning. Teachers need to know how to stretch and engage students in purposeful ways that make meaningful connections to their lives. Teachers as nation builders foster inquiry and passion for learning. They help students see that language and culture ground a sense of identity and broaden the ability to see the world through multiple perspectives.

4. *REsponsible*—*Deliver curriculum that cultivates identity and belonging and develops critical thinking, academic proficiency, responsible behavior, and generosity of heart.* Teachers as nation builders must have a core sense of purpose that is driven by a set of values, goals, mission, and vision. The preparation of teachers also entails helping them to develop their philosophy and voice as educators. Teachers who teach with purpose are driven to touch the lives of students differently. Teachers who empower students to apply their knowledge, skills, and talents with humility and grace encourage responsible citizenry.

5. *RElationship*—*Cultivate relationships and develop partnerships among the school, family, and community.* At the heart of the Native world is an understanding of the symbiotic relationship between people and their environment. Relationships are valued—self to others, family, community, place, and natural and spiritual world. Therefore, education is a school, family, and community affair. Teachers as nation builders create respectful partnerships with families in the education of learners. They help learners value the importance of family and community as contributors in real and responsible ways.

6. *REsponsive*—*Participate as culturally responsive educators.* Culturally responsive educators know the learners, families, and community. They highly value the well-being of the learners. Likewise, responsive educators are observant, alert, disciplined, engaging, and supportive. Teachers as nation builders shape the dynamics of the learning community and are responsive to the needs of the one in addressing the needs of the many. Responsive educators work collaboratively with the learners, families, schools, and community to ensure the success of the learners and learning community.

Ka mo'opuna i ke alo (literally, "grandchild in the presence") is a traditional Hawaiian expression that places the child in a place of importance. Great efforts were made to ensure that the grandchild developed straight and tall in stature, and strong in character, and that the youngster was skilled in the family vocation and knowledgeable about the family's history, place, and genealogy. The perpetuation of the family legacy continued through the well-prepared child. Both the nuclear and extended family participated to ensure that the child attained the family's standards of competency because the success of the child brought honor to the family.

We can build on such examples and draw from the richness of traditional practices for application in the learning environment. Return to the source—*ho'i hou i ke kumu*. The answers are contained in the Native culture, language, beliefs, and practices. These best practices provide a pathway for educating strong and healthy children—the hope for tomorrow. Indeed, teachers are nation builders.

contexts of education, and research methods. Between 1990 and 2002 he was a teacher and high school administrator at Edcouch-Elsa High School, where he also founded the Llano Grande Center for Research and Development, a school based nonprofit organization focused on building community youth leadership. Out of the Center he leads initiatives on digital storytelling, oral histories, and civic engagement. (IOMV Scholar)

Alohalani Housman is an assistant professor of the Hawaiian Language College located at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo. She has been involved with Hawaiian language medium education for over 23 years; first as a parent, then as a teacher in the classroom for 14 years, and currently as a curriculum developer and teacher trainer for 9 years. In 1987 she was recruited to become the teacher in one of the two first Hawaiian language immersion classes in the Hawai'i public school system. She is a mother of four Hawaiian-speaking children, two of whom have graduated from Nawahiokalaniopuu School and from the university. She is also a grandmother of four Hawaiian-speaking children. Alohalani is a pre-service and in-service teacher trainer for K-2 Hawaiian medium schools. She is the developer of Hawaiian literacy materials for elementary schools, with a focus on modernization of the traditional Hawaiian syllabic approach for initial reading beginning in preschool and kindergarten. (Contributing author)

Theresa Jackson is a member of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan. She is currently a full time student at Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College pursuing a degree. Theresa writes that she is most importantly, "a spouse, mother of four, and full of life's experiences from my community." (IOMV Emerging Scholar)

Paul Johnson, Ojibway, has been a student, a student athlete, a coach, a teacher, a program analyst, a professional development consultant, and is currently semi-retired. In 1995, Mr. Johnson began a new career of service. He has begun to give back to his community and now shares his skills with the Saginaw Chippewa Tribe of Michigan. Currently he is the President of the Board of Regents of the Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College. Formerly he worked as the planner for the new Ziibiwing Cultural Center and is currently the lead planner for a new 13 million

dollar Elders Complex being constructed for the Saginaw Chippewa Tribal Community. Mr. Johnson continues his commitment to improving the educational outcomes of Native students. (IOMV I Scholar and Contributing author)

Kū Kahakalau is a native Hawaiian practitioner, educator, researcher, song-writer and community activist, residing on the Island of Hawai'i. As founder and president of the Kanu o ka 'Āina Learning 'Ohana, Kū has created and oversees an innovative family of programs that are community-based, family-oriented and culturally-driven and serve thousands of native Hawaiians from infants to elders. All programs are grounded in a *Pedagogy of Aloha*, developed as a result of decades of indigenous heuristic action research. This *Pedagogy of Aloha* is at once ancient and modern, and presents unprecedented potential to address the distinctive needs of Hawai'i's native population. (Contributing author)

Julie Kaomea is a Native Hawaiian associate professor in the Department of Curriculum Studies at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Julie's educational research utilizes critical, post-structuralist methods and draws from postcolonial theories in analyzing the interface of culture and education with an emphasis on the enduring effects of colonialism in Native Hawaiian and other (post)colonial, indigenous educational communities. (Contributing author)

Keiki Kawai'ae'a is the Director of the Kahuawaiola Indigenous Teacher Education Program, and the Hale Kuamo'o Hawaiian Language Center for the Ka Haka Ula O Ke'elikōlani College of Hawaiian language at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo. She is a pioneer in the Hawaiian language revitalization movement spanning some 25 years as a Hawaiian language immersion parent and teacher, curriculum developer, teacher trainer and administrator. She has been an invited speaker and panelist at national and international gatherings addressing Indigenous education, language and culture revitalization and native teacher education. Keiki has also been instrumental in the development of the Na Honua Maui Ola Hawai'i Guidelines that have an impact on the education of learners in culturally healthy and responsive ways. (IOMV Scholar)